



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
& ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE
NATURAL HERITAGE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM
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Thank you for considering participating in the ***Summer Bat Count 2010***. We are asking interested volunteers to find a bat colony and count the bats as they leave their roosts to feed in the evenings. The colony could be in a barn, attic, tree or bat box ... anywhere you find a group of bats hanging out together! If you want to be a volunteer but don't know of any roosts sites, just let us know and we'll try to help you find one near where you live.

Bats are extremely beneficial to our environment and keeping track of them is a fun and rewarding activity for a family, group of friends or individual. It's an interesting and unique way to connect with nature and do something helpful for wildlife.

Why monitor the bats in Delaware?

In Delaware, bats are a major predator of night-flying insects, and therefore provide us with a valuable and free service. In addition to mosquitoes, bats eat many of the pests that affect our crops including cucumber beetles, ground beetles, and leaf hoppers. It is to our benefit to have them around.

And bats are in trouble ... BIG trouble! A new disease has emerged that is killing huge numbers of bats. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) has caused major mortality at winter hibernation sites in 14 US states and also Canada. WNS is characterized by a white, cold-loving fungus, it causes a sub-dermal infection, unusual behaviors and, eventually, death to the bats. *In April 2010, the fungus associated White Nose Syndrome was confirmed on bats in Delaware.* Delaware doesn't have caves or mines for hibernating bats so we do not see the direct die-offs other states have witnessed. However, we expect to see changes to our bat populations because many of our bats migrate from hibernation sites in WNS-affected states. We don't yet completely understand how the disease affects summer bat colonies. The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife is working closely with other state biologists to monitor the effects of this horrible disease and you can help, too.

Who can volunteer?

- Anyone!

Delaware's good nature depends on you!

What can you do to help?

- Find a bat roost in your area (we can help you if you don't know of any)
- Count the bats as they emerge from their roost in the evening.
- Fill out the forms provided by DE Fish and Wildlife (on the website)
- Send the forms to us.

Are the forms hard to fill out?

- No - we try to keep the amount of paperwork reasonable, and once basic site information is in the database, survey paperwork becomes minimal.

When can I start?

Tonight! We ask that each volunteer conduct at least one count between late May and the end of August, but more frequent surveys would be ideal. If only doing one survey, the best time to survey is mid-July when young are flying and the colony has not begun to disperse. In other states, this survey has documented bats using buildings, bridges and bat boxes (artificial bat roosts). Counts can range from 1 bat to several hundred at one site.

Come and join the bat counters!

It can be an exciting, educational and fun wildlife viewing activity. Many people turn this survey into a social event with a dinner or dessert stop afterward.

You can start by going to:

<http://www.fw.delaware.gov/bats/>

Take a walk around your neighborhood at dusk and watch for flying bats. Then try to track them back to the roost they've exited. This is an exciting opportunity to get involved and become a citizen scientist in important research. Many states are conducting surveys so the data can be pooled over large areas. You can contribute by just counting bats on warm summer evenings. You may have them just outside your back door and, once you start, you'll want to learn more. You can get more bat information by visiting your library, our website or Bat Conservation International's website at www.batcon.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.